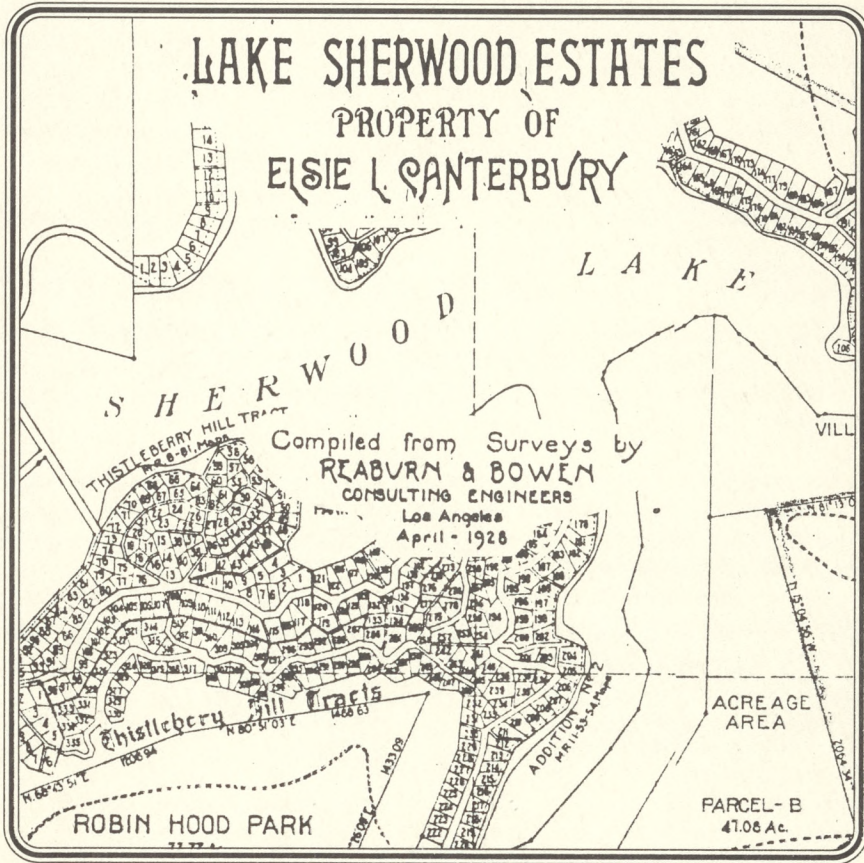


QUARTERLY



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THE VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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Maps used in the cover illustration and photos on pages 5, 7, and 9 from the Raker archives. Aerial photo on page 3 from a 1957 postcard (Columbia Publishing, North Hollywood, California) provided by Paul D. Culver of Thousand Oaks. Photos on pages 17, 19 and 22 from postcards in the Miedema collection.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Barbara Raker, VCMHA docent of the class of '87, was born in Santa Monica and has lived within fifty miles of her birthplace for her entire life. Like many of our docents, Barbara is a perpetual student, having attended U.C.L.A., Loyola University, Moorpark, Pierce, Cal. Lutheran and Mira Mesa colleges.

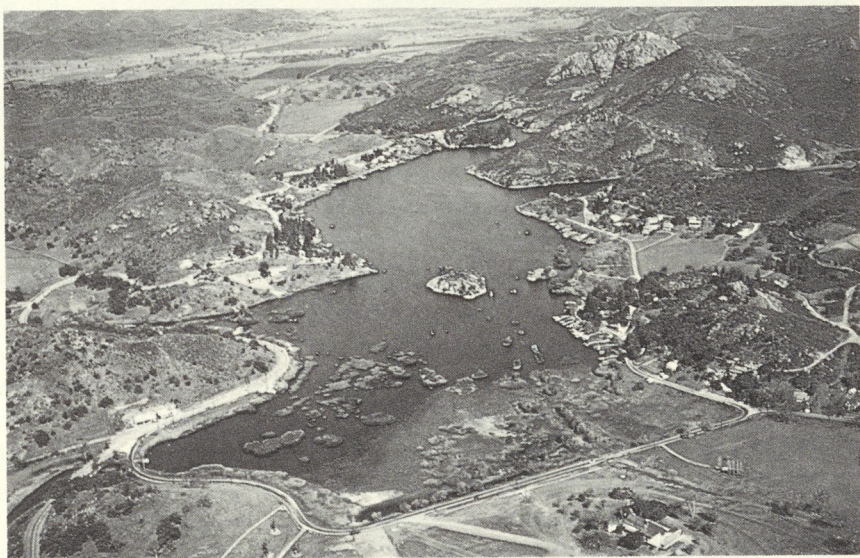
Her interests include interior decorating and design, antiques, travel, museums, horticulture and calligraphy. Her passion for the past twenty years, however, has been the attempt to preserve the wilderness aspects of Lake Sherwood and, in her words, "to prevent or at least delay the entropication of the lake." It is her account of this attempt that follows.

LAKE SHERWOOD

Its Location — Its History — Its Owners

by Barbara K. Raker

From its inception, Lake Matthiessen, as it was then called, had the potential for controversy. Prior to the building of the dam in 1904-05, the lake bottom had been a mountain meadow, beautiful in its natural state. There were giant oak trees throughout the floor of the valley, and the surrounding mountain ranges created a watershed that fed springs and streams, often running the year 'round. The spectacular granite outcropping gave dramatic contrast to such a pastoral scene.



THE LAKE
1957

View Looking East: Stafford Road in foreground; Russell Valley (now Westlake Village) in the background; Potrero Road on left; Lower Lake Road on right (Paul D. Culver).

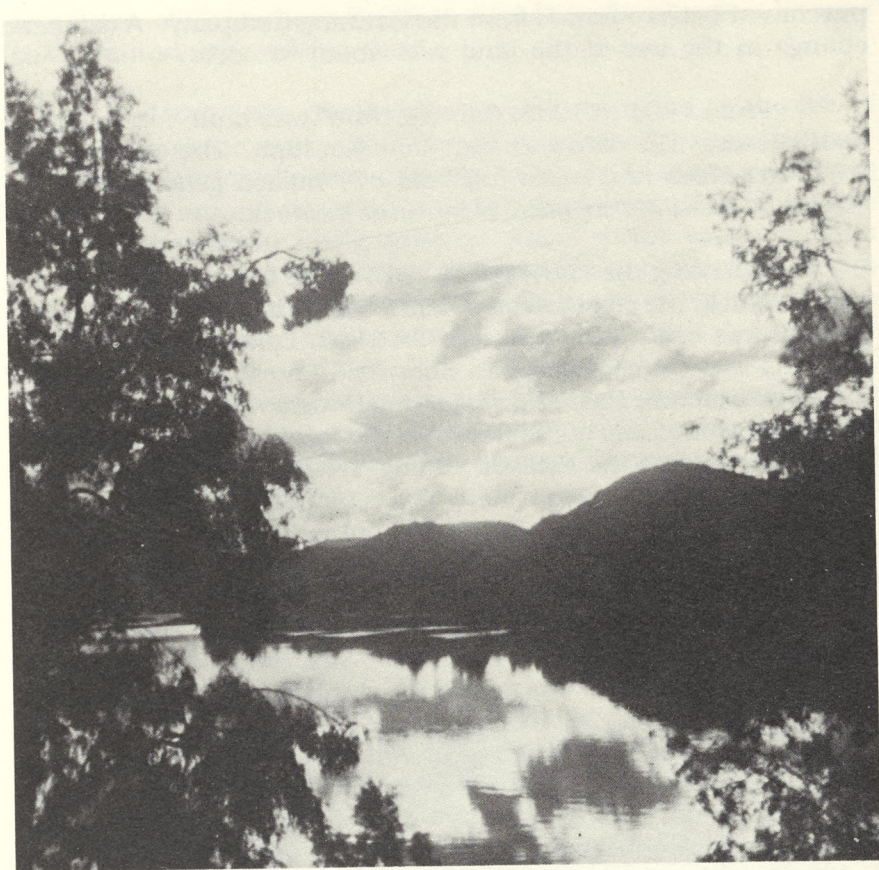
For centuries, the land had been Chumash. There was an abundance of food: nuts, berries, roots, grasses and seed were there for the taking. Small game, as well as mountain lion, coyote and deer, furnished meat and hides. It was indeed a land of plenty, and it was Chumash territory.

An intrusion into this idyllic setting came with the Spanish in 1770. Well after Spain had laid claim to Alta California in 1540, and a year after the first mission in San Diego had been established, Gaspar de Portolá led an overland expedition on his return from Monterey. Father Crespi, his official diarist, wrote of passing through a valley that, from his description, leaves little doubt that they were traveling over the land between what is now Camarillo to the west, and Westlake Village to the east. The Spanish name, Potrero Valley, was later changed to Hidden Valley; however, the road running east and west from Decker Road (Westlake Boulevard) along the north side of the lake — through Hidden Valley to La Reina in Newbury Park — has retained the old name of Potrero Road.

The turn of the century brought with it a change of ownership. In 1802-03, Rancho El Conejo became the second of two Spanish land grants in what was to become Ventura County. The grant was given to two soldiers, José Polanco and José Rodriguez, for their services in the army of King Carlos III of Spain. The Potrero Valley was part of the grant.

In 1822, the undivided one-half interest of José Polanco, having been abandoned by him, reverted to the government for regranting. Captain José Antonio de la Guerra y Noriega petitioned the governor for that half of Rancho El Conejo. The Rancho remained in the De la Guerra and Rodriguez families until after California became the thirty-first state in 1850.

In 1852, a land commission was appointed by the United States government to hear evidence concerning claims to the more than 800 grants that had been made before 1846. After lengthy court proceedings, Rancho El Conejo was surveyed, and a U.S. patent containing 48,671.156 acres of land was confirmed. The Potrero Valley was part of that acreage.



*LAKE SHERWOOD
View Looking West*

In 1872, Rancho El Conejo was sold to John Edwards and Howard Mills. Two more years of legal arbitration followed before the many claims involving the Rodriguez interests could be settled and a final decree of partition issued. Howard Mills was awarded 22,240.44 acres in 1874. The Potrero Valley was part of that decree.

In 1875, Howard Mills sold the southeastern 8,476 acres to Joseph and Isabell McLaren Howard. In 1888, the Howards sold the land to the Banning Company of Long Beach, and a small dam was built forming Lake Eleanor. In 1896, F. W. Matthiessen

purchased Potrero Ranch from the Banning Company. A dramatic change in the use of the land was about to occur.

From 1904 to 1905, the "Big Dam" was built, forming Lake Matthiessen. The dam was sixty-four feet high. The capacity was 2,694 acre-feet, and when full held 877 million gallons of water. The dam consists, in part, of natural bedrock.

Following the marriage in 1917 of the younger Matthiessen to Elsie Mack, the commercial potential of the lake and surrounding acreage was soon to be realized. In 1922, Lake Matthiessen and environs was transformed into Sherwood Forest for the filming of the motion picture *Robin Hood* starring Douglas Fairbanks, Sr. The oak grove at the base of the dam was the location site for Sherwood Forest. It is now the Foxfield Riding School, and no longer part of the land in discussion. Many other film companies have since taken advantage of the scenic beauty of the Potrero Valley (Hidden Valley) and the lake.

In 1923, the Matthiessen-planned subdivision, the Las Turas Lake Club, offered potential buyers "Villa Sites"; the amenities included the exclusivity of a private clubhouse, tennis courts, a golf course and a polo field, as well as the lake activities of swimming, boating, fishing and sailing. The names given to streets, parks and tracts within the subdivision had an "Olde English" flavor — Thorsby, Upson, Trentham, Stafford, Hereford, Thistleberry Hill, Littlejohn Hill, Nottingham, Friar Tuck, Shrewsbury, Salisbury and Robin Hood.

All these grandiose plans, however, came to a halt with the termination of the Matthiessen marriage. In 1925, the divorce settlement awarded Elsie Matthiessen the lower or eastern part of the ranch, including both lakes. F. W. Matthiessen demanded and received the right to pump water from Lake Matthiessen to irrigate his lands to the west. A small section of the lake at its northwest corner was not included in the settlement. That portion, and the right to pump from the lake, still remain with the property in Hidden Valley.

Elsie Matthiessen remarried and with her new husband, James Canterbury, reactivated the plans for subdivision under the

new name of Canterbury Estates. And Lake Matthiessen became Lake Canterbury — for a time.

In 1928, Lake Sherwood Estates was added to the list of names. However, with the Depression of the thirties, this new attempt to develop the area failed to succeed. Cottages were built sporadically around the lake, but were used primarily in the summertime, the climate being quite unique — in the winter months the temperature can drop below twenty degrees Fahrenheit. Pipes can and do freeze and “blow.” The less hardy would return to a more benign climate until spring.

During these lean years, the lake was made available to the public. For a fee, anyone could boat, fish or use the picnic grounds at the base of the dam, the site transformed into Sherwood Forest for *Robin Hood*.

In the 1940s, California was “discovered” once again — this time by servicemen stationed on the west coast. After World War



LAKE SHERWOOD
Post-War Years

II, there was an enormous increase in the population in our state. Fortunately, Ventura County was "way out there" and much too far to commute from the Los Angeles area. Lake Sherwood, as it came to be called, was saved from urban development.

In 1956, the Janss Corporation showed interest in the lake property, but nothing concrete transpired. Lake Sherwood continued to be a place few people knew about, and Hidden Valley was allowed to remain hidden — but not for long.

In 1963, Dayton Realty of Beverly Hills bought the lake and surrounding property. The untenable restrictions placed upon the resident property owners by Dayton resulted in a property rights action suit against Dayton. After five years of legal action, a settlement was finally reached in April of 1968. Then followed years of conflict between the residents and Dayton Realty.

One of the many proposals unacceptable to the residents was Dayton's attempt to change the existing zoning restrictions. Their plans for development were far more extensive than the existing zoning would allow, and included accommodations for high density housing and a commercial complex. These changes were successfully blocked time after time. Had they been successful, the rural environment of the area would have been totally altered.

A series of incidents followed. The picnic grounds, which had been moved to a new location off Carlyle Canyon and had included boat rentals, were closed to the public. In March of 1981, Dayton announced that they would drain the lake. The residents were able to stop this proposal with an injunction, but only temporarily. The reason for the move was then "clarified" by Dayton as a need to test the dam. The State Division of Safety of Dams assured Dayton that it was not necessary to drain the lake to accomplish their stated purpose; the necessary testing could be accomplished downstream. The state listed 120 dams in California that were to be checked for structural safety; only one required that the water be drained from the storage facility.

Once again lawsuits and counter lawsuits were filed between the residents and Dayton Realty. Protests were heard countywide but, in the fall of 1983, Judge Jerome Berenson ruled in favor of



THE LAKE
1984

Dayton Realty. In December of that year the valves were opened and the draining began. By the summer of 1984, all that remained of a once beautiful lake was a small pond at the base of the dam. Thousands of dead and dying fish were trapped in it. The sight and smell were unbelievable. What had existed for eighty years had been destroyed in eight months.

The water was gone — but no testing took place. Letters were written. Protests were made. Dayton was quoted as stating they had no intention of allowing the lake to refill. In January

of 1985, David Murdock bought the dry lake bed and the surrounding acreage from Barney Morris of Dayton Realty. Mr. Murdock also owns the old F. W. Matthiessen property in Hidden Valley — the same parcel of land that extends into the lake bed and retains the right to pump water out of the lake for irrigation purposes — when there is water to pump. It is interesting to note that the old Potrero Ranch, at least in part, is once again under ownership of one man. Mr. Murdock's company names are Ventura Farms and Lake Sherwood Ranch, a limited partnership.

Mr. Murdock also has plans for yet another development: another clubhouse, tennis courts, a golf course, etc. There have been delays, and the residents have experienced a second year of living around a dry lake bed.

To the surprise of no one, the dam has been deemed safe. The heavy rains of 1986 filled the lake, but the wild beauty is gone. The tules were removed, the willow thickets uprooted, the lake bed bulldozed, the shoreline changed. There are no fish in Lake Sherwood now. No crappie, no bass, no bluegill, no catfish. The heron, bittern, kingfisher, cormorant and osprey are gone. No rail or sora. No grebe or egret. No migratory waterfowl that were such a delight to see arrive and depart each year. There is nothing there for these wild creatures. No habitat, no cover, no food supply. Lake Sherwood may recover from the abuse it has suffered, But it will never again be the isolated retreat a few of us had the great good fortune to know.

Perhaps the Chumash had the same desperate feeling of loss when what they knew and cherished was taken from them so many years ago.

ADDENDUM 1988

The preceding pages are an account of the events that affected the Lake Sherwood area up to and including the first quarter of 1986.

It is now February 1988. There has been little change in the Potrero Valley during these two years. The required permits and reports, plus adherence to the Ventura County regulations and ordinances, imposed a moratorium on the start of the planned development.

But in January of this year the bulldozers, earth movers and various other pieces of equipment arrived. Meadows and hillsides are being scraped clean of all natural vegetation. Great areas of raw brown earth are now exposed where once the land was lush. Deer and other wildlife have been seen running in confusion and fear over the denuded hills, their habitats destroyed. What was bulldozed was pushed into great piles of roots, trunks, branches, leaves and soil — along with the carcasses of small meadow animals not fast enough to escape.

The time chosen to start the grading was just prior to the January rains. The runoff over the stripped areas filled the lake with brown, muddy water. The winds of February then made a dust bowl of the surrounding valley.

The hills to the southeast are still untouched. From them, the runoff into the lake by way of seven small waterfalls and rivulets is crystal clear. If you row a small skiff down to that end of the lake and walk back up into those hills, you will find wildflowers, see deer track, and hear bird calls. The heavy equipment is out of sight and sound.

To the north of the lake, a new and wider Potrero Road is planned. It will cross over the hills and parallel the old road, giving access to a proposed 700 new dwellings. It will also reach the meadow southwest of the lake, part of which is presently being transformed into a golf course. The County of Ventura has given permission to remove 393 trees for the construction of the golf course, and the blasting to alter the natural configuration of the land is under way.

Just how long it will take to complete this enormous change is unknown, but it most certainly has begun.

ADDENDUM 1989

Much has happened at Lake Sherwood since the addendum written in 1988.

The demolition of natural terrain, the mountain meadow at the southwest end of the lake, was done to accommodate the new golf course and housing development around it. The course is finished, and there are some model homes in the final stages of completion.

To reach this area, a new access road is now under construction since the old Potrero Road could not handle the tremendous increase in traffic that will occur. The new road is a four-lane highway cutting through the hills to the north of, and more or less parallel to, the old road. Instead of a number of graceful bridges over the stream beds and valleys, following the natural flow of the land, the hills were leveled and the valleys filled. This is being accomplished by blasting, then bulldozing the rubble into the valleys.

The din of blasting and bulldozing, heavy equipment and workers driving back and forth on Potrero has been constant. Living at the lake has changed from serene to chaotic.

The approach to the lake from the east had been lovely. Oak and sycamore were on either side of the road, some of their branches arching all the way across Potrero. It was always such a welcoming sight. These trees have been chopped down!. Hundreds of years of growth to create such splendor, destroyed in a few days in the summer of '89.

Along the roadside, the natural growth of native plants was also ripped out. It looks — and sounds — like a war zone, but soon street lights, curbs and sidewalks will complete the picture of Suburbia. The lake level is down. Mr. Murdock, of course, has the right to pump water.

Few migratory waterfowl come here now. Their habitat is gone. There are some fish in the lake, mostly catfish; schools of

them were probably stocked when the rains filled the lake in 1986. Most of the shoreline was stripped of all growth, both in the water and along the shore edge. Nothing has been allowed to grow that would invite any kind of wildlife.

Beauty, of course, is in the eye of the beholder. For this beholder that word can never describe what exists at Lake Sherwood now. Too much has been destroyed.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Miss Madeline Miedema came to Oxnard when she was nine years of age. Her father, the Reverend William Miedema, was minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Oxnard and, at the same time, pastor of the Community Presbyterian Church in Hueneme.

Miss Miedema was educated in the Oxnard schools and in Occidental College and the University of California at Berkeley. She was a teacher and an administrator in the Oxnard Union High School district; after she retired she was elected to two terms on that district's board of trustees. She has a long-time interest in the history of the area and has acted as consultant on many of our publications regarding Oxnard and environs. Her "Oxnard's Golden Decade" was featured in the Spring 1980 issue of the *Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*.

"SOME NEAT SORT OF A STRUCTURE"

by Madeline Miedema

Ever since the pagoda in Oxnard's Plaza Park was built in 1910, many stories have circulated about it. It has been said that the Chinese residents of Oxnard built it, that Henry Oxnard dedicated it during the Fourth of July celebration in 1910, that a band performed from the second floor of the pagoda on that occasion and that the orator of the day spoke to eager crowds from the bandstand. Henry Oxnard's nephew even told a group of citizens in 1983 that his uncle had brought the pagoda from Japan. Interesting and romantic as these stories are, none is true.

Oxnard's plaza was laid out in the original plan of the city drawn up by the Colonia Improvement Company in 1898, and it continued to be owned by that company until 1908 when it was offered to the city. The Improvement Company had, according to early pictures, laid out crisscross walks and planted palm and other trees and grass. But Mrs. John G. Hill, who owned one-third of the rights to the property, requested \$3000 for her share. In August of 1908 the city decided to pay Aranetta Rice Hill the sum she wanted, and the park became city property.

Possibly because it felt that it should do something to beautify and improve this new acquisition, the city board of trustees (now called the city council) on September 21, 1909, employed landscape artist William David Cook, Jr. of Los Angeles to make a preliminary examination of the park and report to the board. By the meeting of November 23, the board had Mr. Cook's plans and studied them in detail.

Shortly thereafter the *Oxnard Courier* reported that "from all indications Oxnard is to have as pretty a little park as can be found in these parts." Apparently many of Mr. Cook's suggestions were accepted. The newspaper reports, "According to his plans there will be a water tank over the artesian well in the center of the park and around this will be constructed some neat sort of a structure, on two

sides of which there will be seats, on one side a drinking fountain and on the other a door. From this the water supply for watering the park will be procured and this will probably prove the most costly improvement to the park, but will make it quite an attractive one." The plans for the beautification of the park also included removal of some fifteen trees, laying of pipes for irrigation, grading, leveling, putting in new sidewalks and replanting with trees, shrubs and flowers.

In December of 1909 the plans for the park were given an unexpected push by the board of trade (precursor of the chamber of commerce). That board decided that Oxnard would entertain all of Ventura County in a "monster" Fourth of July celebration in 1910. They promised the "most gigantic plans for a Fourth of July celebration ever developed in Ventura County." The board of trustees, during the spring of 1910, worked very hard to have the replanting of the park, the new sidewalks and "some sort of neat structure" completed by July 4.

By February the board had hired an architectural designer for the "neat structure." The architect was Alfred J. Priest of Los Angeles. The structure to cover the artesian well was now designated a grandstand. The *Oxnard Courier* reported on February 4 that "Mr. Priest, the architectural designer for the park's grandstand, was present at the meeting last night and brought before the board his recent plans relating to the new grandstand to be erected in the center of the park." The board was pleased with the design, but postponed a decision until there was more information on the cost.

Some time between the February 3 meeting and a February 23 meeting of the board of trustees, the "neat structure" began to be called "the pagoda" instead of the grandstand. As will be seen presently, the structure built in 1910 did not have either a grandstand or a bandstand. On the twenty-third, the board instructed the clerk to advertise for bids for the cement sidewalks for the plaza to be built according to the plans of David Cook and, under another motion, to advertise for bids for the pagoda. The minutes read, "It was moved by Trustee Eastwood and seconded by Trustee Sailer that the clerk be and is hereby instructed to advertise for sealed bids for the construction of a cement Pagoda in the Plaza — said Pagoda to be



OXNARD PLAZA

CA. 1908

The above photo was taken at the time the park became city property. Note the original plantings and crisscross sidewalks as well as the newly completed Carnegie Library to the left of center. The row of eucalyptus trees is located approximately where Magnolia Avenue is today. This view is from the south looking north.

built according to the plans, drawings and specifications made by Alfred J. Priest and filed with the said Clerk on the 23rd of February, 1910."

During the meeting of March 8, 1910, the board considered two bids for building the pagoda. Myer and Abplanalp's bid of \$1148 was rejected because the building of the sidewalks and the pagoda, contrary to the terms of the advertisement, were united in one bid instead of being tendered separately and because the bid was not accompanied by a certified check as requested. Consequently, the

bid of Thomas H. Carroll for \$1215 for the pagoda, even though higher than that of Myer and Abplanalp, was accepted.

There existed apparently some misapprehension on the part of the citizens as to the exact purpose of the pagoda. The *Daily Oxnard Courier* on April 15, 1910, found it necessary to print a description of the use to which the structure was to be put. "The building is to be used primarily to hide and house the water system of the park, which centers in the artesian well that was acquired with the park. There is to be a motor and a pump under the pagoda and water will be furnished to every part of the block through the pipe lines that radiate in all directions. The pagoda will be built of concrete and will have a roof of Spanish galvanized tile. There will be a series of eight windows in the upper part of the structure. When completed it will be a handsome addition to the park property." It will be noted again that the use of the pagoda as a grandstand is not mentioned.

By the end of April the new park landscape and the pagoda were beginning to take shape, but there obviously was some criticism of the pagoda. The *Ventura Free Press* on April 28, 1910, quotes the editor of a rival Oxnard newspaper called *The Oxnard Review* "The miniature temple or pagoda that is to adorn the rejuvenated plaza, modernized into a city park, is assuming handsome shape and will soon be an object of ornate loveliness if not a joy forever.... Without intending to criticize the wisdom of the expenditure or draw invidious comparisons, we feel constrained to remark that a bandstand with a combination park tool house and toilet rooms, similar to the one built at Ventura as an adornment to their new park, would have been more useful, if less attractive."

By May 6 the bid of the Oxnard Furniture and Plumbing Company for the installation of a pumping plant for \$284.50 was accepted. The pump was to be a Byron Jackson double phase one with a cast iron motor base attached, and the motor was designated as a five horsepower Westinghouse induction motor.

By June 10 the plaza had new walks, fresh flower beds, attractive trees, and an expanse of new lawn and nine new cast iron lampposts, each surmounted by five light globes like those on Fifth Street in Los Angeles. The *Daily Courier* felt that the park and the



OXNARD PLAZA

CA. 1910

The park has been newly landscaped and the pagoda, sans bandstand, has appeared in the center of the park. The twin smokestacks of the American Beet Sugar Company are visible at the right. This view is from the west looking east.

pagoda would be the best advertisements for the city at the time of the Fourth of July celebration. The city fathers voted to spend \$50 to decorate the city hall and to give the pagoda lighting "that will give it a very handsome appearance in the evening." By July 1 the *Daily Courier* was headlining "The Biggest Fourth of July Celebration in Southern California."

All of this advance publicity must have alarmed some people for on July 1 the *Daily Courier* also reported, "It has been decided to enclose the city park with a fence that will prevent the crowds from trampling down the new lawns, flowers, etc. This plan is the only one to pursue under the circumstances."

There exists a rare postcard, a photograph taken about the time of the 1910 Fourth of July celebration. It shows the plaza with its newly laid out sidewalks and new plantings. The pagoda does not have the floor which is today the bandstand; the roof of the present

bandstand rests on the concrete walls of the lower section. It was at that time no more than a rather ornate pump house. The postcard also shows the fence which was built around the entire square.

The fourth day of July in 1910 was a "fair and lovely day" with the "temperature always at the right degree." Some five to six thousand visitors came on special trains from all over the county and from Santa Barbara. The *Ventura Free Press* wrote that fifteen hundred people came from Ventura alone and that "roads were lined with automobiles and rigs and every train was packed." It added that "the early trains were so crowded that dozens of people were left on the depot platform unable to get on the train." And the *Courier* said that "every nook and corner of the down town streets were covered by a good natured and enthusiastic crowd of celebrants."

Even though the plaza was apparently surrounded by a fence and was off limits for the day, the park was in the center of the Fourth of July parade. Two hundred specially decorated automobiles drove west on Fifth Street in a preliminary parade a half a mile long. The first prize in this section went to James Doud in a Franklin, the second prize to the Misses Virden in a Sterling, and honorable mention to R.C. Shand in a Hupmobile and Albert Pfeiler in an Overland. Harry Beasley and family rode in a handsomely decorated Stoddard. After this parade the autos were on display around the plaza.

Major Driffill was the grand marshal of the main parade; Charles Donlon and Thomas Rice were his aides. Bands and floats proceeded west on Fifth Street, turned to the left at B Street and circled the plaza back to B. From there they went north to First, west to C Street and thence south to the Athletic Park, which then occupied four blocks on the northwest corner of C Street and Wooley Road.

Twenty-two floats enlivened the parade. The first prize went to the Ventura Chamber of Commerce entry which featured a twelve-foot chanticleer with a tail of palm branches painted red. The second prize was awarded to the American Beet Sugar Company for depicting a miniature factory that ground out sugar and delivered small souvenir bags to the crowd lining the parade route. Three bands

marched the distance to the Athletic Park, one from Fillmore and one from Santa Barbara together with the band of the Knights of Pythias, which had arrived that morning by train from Los Angeles.

The orator of the day did not speak from the pagoda's bandstand since the pagoda on that date did not have a grandstand platform. And Henry Oxnard did not dedicate it nor speak on that occasion. In fact, he was not mentioned in any contemporary account of that Fourth of July celebration, and no newspaper in Oxnard or Ventura mentioned that he was even present for the day.

The stand for the speaker of the day was set up on west Fifth Street between E and F Streets under a magnificent triple row of black walnut trees which had been planted by John G. Hill. The middle row of trees ran down Fifth Street for two blocks and the others lined the north and south sides. The orator of the day, the Honorable Lee C. Gates, was introduced by Charles Blackstock. The orator attracted a large crowd to the "leafy shade of the walnut trees" as he spoke on the early history of the colonies and the formation of our nation. After the speech the crowds could have lunch under the walnut trees of the south lane where Eifler and Myers had their barbecue concession and three hundred feet of tables.

None of the other events of the day, and there were many, centered around the park or the pagoda. The baseball game in the afternoon at the Athletic Park was attended by some three thousand people. They saw the Oxnard team defeat the Los Angeles Teddy Bears. A thousand people took advantage of the free rides to the Hueneme beaches on the Bakersfield and Ventura Railroad Company tracks in cars loaned for the day by the Southern Pacific. The fireworks in the evening were set off near the Midway, an amusement park located on American Beet Sugar Company property at Fifth and Oxnard Boulevard.

"All in all," the *Ventura Free Press* summed up the day, "Oxnard gave the county a great celebration and treated everybody right."

There is no way of knowing at this date whether subsequent events resulted from the magnificent Fourth of July celebration. But

on October 1, 1910, the city board of trustees authorized an allowance of \$15 per month toward the support of an Oxnard band, this stipend to continue as long as the band was active. And on April 28, 1911, the headline in the *Oxnard Courier* read, "Pagoda in Park Will be Transformed into Combination Ornament and Bandstand."

At the April 25, 1911, meeting of the board of trustees, according to the *Daily Courier*, "a drawing was presented to the board by Mayor Joseph Sailer in which the present pagoda in the city park is transformed into a bandstand. It is proposed that the roof of the present structure shall be raised to allow room for an open bandstand under it, the floor of the same being where the roof now fastens to the



OXNARD PLAZA
POST JULY 1911

The roof of the pagoda has been raised to accommodate a bandstand floor. To the left is the Oxnard Hotel — rebuilt following a disastrous fire in 1910. This view is from the east looking west.

cement walls of the building. A stairway through the lower portion will be used for the band alone." The park committee of the board was instructed to have plans and specifications made so that local contractors could bid on it. The estimated cost was \$300.

On May 23, Alfred Priest, the original architect of the pagoda, submitted plans for the board's selection. Plan number two was chosen, and the clerk of the board was instructed to write to Mr. Priest requesting him to draw up specifications. On June 13, 1911, the board opened two sealed bids. One was from Thomas H. Carroll for \$745 and the other from Ed Abplanalp for \$760. Thomas Carroll was awarded the contract to remodel and complete the alterations on the pagoda. He was required to finish the work in three weeks .

Thus by July of 1911, the pagoda was in the form in which we see it today. The city board of trustees must have liked the new bandstand since on August 15 of that year they approved an allowance of \$40 per month for the military band.

SOURCES

The minutes of the Oxnard Board of Trustees (City Council).

The following newspapers from September 1909 to August 1911:

Daily Oxnard Courier

Oxnard Courier (weekly reprint of the main articles from the above)

Ventura Free Press

Ventura Weekly Democrat

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